

THE LIVING ROOM TIMES

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 19, 1999

ISSUE 10 OF SEASON 6 ISSUE 362 SINCE DEC. 27, 1993

It's lights out — briefly — at NHS

Power goes out in whole building for a few seconds, parts of building for nearly 1½ hours; overloaded generator to blame

"IT APPEARS THAT WE'VE HAD A POWER FAILURE IN PARTS OF THE BUILDING. THERE IS NO EMERGENCY." —**MR. HOEY**

"IT'S KINDA COOL." —**AKASH PATEL**



Above: The corridor in front of the main office lies in darkness at midday Tuesday. This portion of the first-floor hallway was one of several scattered areas in the building which lost power for about 78 minutes.

An overloaded electrical generator on Willard Avenue shattered the monotony of a typical Tuesday midday at Newington High, knocking out power to the entire building in a brief blackout which lasted only a few seconds, then leaving some parts of the building in the dark for about an hour and 18 minutes.

"There is no emergency," NHS Principal Paul Hoey reassured everyone in an intercom message at 11:05, about two minutes after the power first went out.

Indeed there was no emergency
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Above: A Connecticut Light & Power worker repositions an electrical connector at 12:21 PM Tuesday, restoring power to all of NHS.

NHS softball ranked #2 in New England

Undefeated Indians have 4 games in next 3 days; Senior Night tonight

The Newington softball Indians (15-0), #1 in the Connecticut state coaches' poll since last Tuesday, are now ranked #2 in New England in the NESN poll, according to All-State third baseman Jenn Castelhana.

Castelhana said the poll standings have been faxed to local newspapers, and although they hasn't been printed yet, a *Hartford Courant* reporter told Newington coach Anne McKernan about the poll. The poll will be printed in the *Courant* on Friday, according to Castelhana.

"How awesome is that," exclaimed Castelhana. "Now we'll go and win all of our games this week and maybe we'll be #1 by next week."

Newington has four games in the next three days, starting with tonight's Senior Night game vs. Bristol Central, third in the CCC South standings. The Indians, who are first, then travel to last-place Bulkeley for a doubleheader on Thursday, followed by an all-important showdown on Friday at archrival Southington, currently in second place.

Power failure disrupts daily routine

78-minute partial outage causes inconveniences, little else

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— but there were a string of inconveniences and peculiar situations, all caused by the sudden loss of power which began at about 11:03 AM.

First-floor exit signs flickered like strobe lights because of the inconsistent flow of electricity. A student reported being momentarily trapped in the elevator. The computer labs were temporarily disabled by the outage, with the servers in all the second-floor labs going down as a result.

Cafeteria ovens stopped working because of the power failure, prompting Mr. Hoey to ask students to “please be patient” because “we may not be able to serve as usual in the cafeteria.” Mr. Lombardi was forced to move his political science class down the hall to Ms. McKernan’s classroom in order to watch the video he had planned to show, because his VCR wasn’t getting enough power to function properly.

Some students found themselves waiting outside their classes in dark hallways, illuminated only by generator-powered emergency lights. Meanwhile, in other hallways which had lost power only for the initial 10 seconds or so, life went on as usual.

Things were far from usual for students taking the Advanced Placement Probability and Statistics test; the lights went out on them, and they had to move the test to John Wallace Middle School to escape Newington High’s unpredictable power grid, according to test taker Todd Stigliano.

In Mr. Ludlow’s fifth-period English class, rumors flew about whether the power outage could lead to a premature end to the school day. “Allyson Perlini told me [that] if the power’s out for an hour, we get to go home,” said Ali Lucey.

“I sort of vaguely remember being in here at one point [without power] for longer than an hour without going home,” Ludlow responded. “And the other thing is, remember, it’s only partial. You go out in the halls now, and the lights are still on... So I wouldn’t bank on that. Don’t get your hopes up.”

Officer Bob Buchas later backed up Ludlow’s words when asked, about 50 minutes into the power outage, if there was a chance students might be sent home: “Not unless the

Hall monitors reportedly saw lightning bolts flying out of the Willard Avenue generator box.

whole building is out. If the whole building is out, then they dismiss. But not if it’s just in a few spots.”

The whole building was out for only a few fleeting moments, starting with the loud bang of the generator going out — Josh Visone saw and heard the

auditorium’s circuit breakers all snap in unison; hall monitors reportedly saw lightning bolts flying out of the Willard Avenue generator box — and ending just seconds later. But the isolated spots which remained off included the hallway in front of the main office, and at 11:04 came the announcement from Mr. Hoey: “It appears that we’ve had a power failure in parts of the building. There is no emergency. Please pass to your fifth-period class at this time.”

“It’s kinda cool,” senior Akash Patel said of the power outage. “I was walking down the hallway, and it just turned off. It was kind of fun to walk around.”

Hoey issued another announcement a few minutes later, after the start of fifth period. “Can I have your attention please?” he began. “An update on the power situation in the building: There seems to have been a problem with a transformer someplace on Willard Avenue that’s affecting our power in the building. [Connecticut Light & Power] has been called. We may have to have sporadic power outages during their repair of the situation. I’ll keep you informed.”

And so he did, coming back on the intercom just before the end of fifth period to inform students about the hot lunch shortage caused by powerless ovens. “It was a transformer pole out by the student parking lot that went out,” Hoey said. “It may be some time before the power comes back on.”

As it turned out, it was barely a half-hour after that 11:48 announcement that power was restored throughout the building. A CL&P repairman elevated up to the Willard Avenue power lines to fix the problem, and at 12:21 PM, as he re-attached a displaced connector feeding the generator, the school’s electrical server came back on-line.

The problem was caused simply by a power surge in the generator, not by an accident or any other cause, Officer Buchas said.



Above: An instant before most of the lights came back on after the initial 10-second full power outage, a student walks down a hallway illuminated almost exclusively by sunlight.